

Tenses

There are twelve different types of English tense listed below including the structure of each and every tense, and the explanation and usage of tenses, and also examples of common error and the way to correct them.

Present tenses

- **Structure of present simple**
- **Structure of present continuous**

Past tenses

- **Structure of past simple**
- **Structure of past continuous**

Present perfect tenses

- **Structure of present perfect (simple)**
- **Structure of present perfect (continuous)**

Past perfect tenses

- **Structure of past perfect (simple)**
- **Structure of past perfect (continuous)**

Future tenses

- **Structure of future simple**
- **Structure of future continuous**
- **Structure of 'going to' future**
- **Present tenses used for the future**
- **Structure of future perfect (simple)**
- **Structure of future perfect (continuous)**
- Passive tenses**
- **Structure of passive forms**

Lets Start Tenses.....

Present tenses



Structure of present simple:

How to form the present simple tense in English

Structure of present simple		
positive	negative	question
<i>I work in a school.</i>	<i>I don't work in a school.</i>	<i>Do I work in a school?</i>
<i>You work in a school.</i>	<i>You don't work in a school.</i>	<i>Do you work in a school?</i>
<i>He works in a school.</i>	<i>He doesn't (does not) work in a school.</i>	<i>Does he work in a school?</i>
<i>She works in a school.</i>	<i>She doesn't (does not) work in a school.</i>	<i>Does she work in a school?</i>
<i>It rains a lot.</i>	<i>It doesn't (does not) rain.</i>	<i>Does it rain a lot?</i>
<i>We work in a school.</i>	<i>We don't work in a school.</i>	<i>Do we work in a school?</i>
<i>They work in a school.</i>	<i>They don't work in a school.</i>	<i>Do they work in a school?</i>

Present simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I working in Barcelona.	I work in Barcelona.	The <i>-ing</i> form is not used in the present simple.
He work in Barcelona.	He works in Barcelona.	The third person <i>he, she, it</i> adds <i>s</i> .
He work in London? Work he in Barcelona?	Does he work in Barcelona?	Questions in third person: does + subject + infinitive . All other persons: do + subject + infinitive .
He not work in Barcelona.	He doesn't work in Barcelona.	Negatives in third person: subject + doesn't + infinitive . All other persons: subject + don't + infinitive .



Structure of present continuous

How to form the present continuous tense in English

The present continuous tense is sometimes called the present progressive.

Structure of present continuous		
positive	negative	question
<i>I'm (I am) reading a book.</i>	<i>I'm not reading.</i>	<i>Am I reading?</i>
<i>You're (you are) reading a book.</i>	<i>You're not reading.</i>	<i>Are you reading?</i>

<i>He's (he is) reading a book.</i>	<i>He's not (also he isn't) reading.</i>	<i>Is he reading?</i>
<i>She's (she is) reading a book.</i>	<i>She's not (also she isn't) reading.</i>	<i>Is she reading?</i>
<i>It's (it is) raining.</i>	<i>It's not (also it isn't) raining.</i>	<i>Is it raining?</i>
<i>We're (we are) reading a book.</i>	<i>We're not reading.</i>	<i>Are we reading?</i>
<i>They're (they are) reading a book.</i>	<i>They're not reading.</i>	<i>Are they reading?</i>

Present continuous – common mistakes

Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
They waiting for you.	They are waiting for you.	To form a continuous tense we use be + -ing .
They are waiting for you?	Are they waiting for you?	In questions the subject (<i>they</i>) and the auxiliary verb (<i>be</i>) usually change places.
Do they waiting for you?	Are they waiting for you?	In questions the subject (<i>they</i>) and the auxiliary verb (<i>be</i>) change places.

Where they are waiting for you?	Where are they waiting for you?	In questions the subject (<i>they</i>) and the auxiliary verb (<i>be</i>) change places.
She doesn't watching TV.	She isn't watching TV.	To form the negative we put <i>not</i> after the verb <i>be</i> (am not = 'm not, is not = isn't, are not = aren't).
I'm believing you.	I believe you.	Some verbs are not used in continuous tenses – these are called stative verbs (e.g. <i>believe, come from, cost, depend, exist, feel, hate, like</i>).



Past tenses



Structure of past simple

How to form the past simple tense in English

Structure of past simple		
positive	negative	question
I / you / he / she / it / we / they arrived.	I / you / he / she / it / we / they didn't arrive.	Did I / you / he / she / it / we / they arrive?

Past simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I was work in London.	I worked in London.	In positive sentences, a helping verb such as <i>was</i> or <i>did</i> is not used.
He worked in London?	Did he work in London?	The helping verb <i>did</i> is used in past simple questions.
Worked he in London?	Did he work in London?	The helping verb <i>did</i> is used in past simple questions.
Did he wrote a letter?	Did he write a letter?	The main verb is used in the infinitive form in questions and negatives.
He didn't wrote a letter.	He didn't write a letter.	The main verb is used in the infinitive form in questions and negatives.
He writed a letter.	He wrote a letter.	Some verbs are irregular. Not all verbs end in <i>-ed</i> in the past simple form.



Structure of past continuous

How to form the past continuous in English

The past continuous tense is also sometimes called the past progressive.

Structure of past continuous		
positive	negative	question
I / he / she was reading a book. It was raining .	I / he / she wasn't reading a book. It wasn't raining .	Was I / he / she reading a book? Was it raining ?
You / we / they were reading a book.	You / we / they weren't reading a book.	Were you / we / they reading a book?
Past continuous – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I waiting for him almost two hours.	I was waiting for him almost two hours.	To form the past continuous we use was/were + verb (-ing) .
What did he doing when you saw him?	What was he doing when you saw him?	To form the past continuous we use was/were + verb (-ing) .
We were playing tennis every morning.	We played tennis every morning.	We mostly use the past simple tense (<i>we played</i>)

		for repeated actions in the past.
They watched TV when I came.	They were watching TV when I came.	We use the past continuous when we want to say what was happening (what was in progress) at a particular time in the past.



Present perfect tenses



Structure of present perfect (simple)

Present perfect simple tense

How to form the present perfect simple tense in English.

The second table shows you some common mistakes and how to correct them.

Structure of present perfect simple		
positive	negative	question
I / you / we / they have gone.	I / you / we / they haven't gone.	Have I / you / we / they gone?

he / she / it has gone.	he / she / it hasn't gone.	Has he / she / it gone?
Present perfect simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I worked every day this week.	I have worked every day this week.	We use the present perfect (<i>have worked</i>) when we speak about an unfinished time period (<i>this week, this year, etc.</i>).
Steven has wrote a new book.	Steven has written a new book.	We use the past participle of the verb – <i>written</i> is the past participle, <i>wrote</i> is the past simple.
Did you have seen him before?	Have you seen him before?	The helping verb <i>have</i> is used in the present perfect and it is inverted with the person (<i>you have</i> becomes <i>have you</i>).
I didn't have seen him before.	I haven't seen him before.	The helping verb <i>have</i> is used in the present

		perfect – to make it negative we simply add <i>not</i> (<i>n't</i>).
I am here since last week.	I have been here since last week.	The present perfect is used to show an action which continues to the present (an unfinished action).
I've been knowing him for 5 years.	I've known him for 5 years.	Verbs such as <i>know</i> , <i>want</i> , <i>like</i> , etc. (called <u>stative verbs</u>) suggest permanent states, not actions, so are used in the simple form, NOT the <i>-ing</i> form.



Structure of present perfect (continuous)

Structure of present perfect continuous		
positive	negative	question
I / you / we / they have been working	I / you / we / they haven't been working	Have I / you / we / they been working?
he / she / it has been working	he / she / it hasn't been working	Has he / she / it been working?

Present perfect continuous – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
It has been rain heavily all day.	It has been raining heavily all day.	The structure of the present perfect continuous is have/has + been + verb + -ing .
I have sat here for two hours.	I have been sitting here for two hours.	Verbs such as <i>sit</i> , <i>wait</i> , <i>speak</i> , etc. (‘non-stative’ verbs) suggest continuity and so are mostly used in the continuous (- ing) form.
<p>Which?</p> <p><i>I have worked here for five years.</i> <i>I have been working here for five years.</i></p>		When BOTH the simple and continuous forms are possible, native speakers prefer to use the continuous.



Past perfect tenses



Structure of past perfect (simple)

Structure of past perfect simple		
positive	negative	question

I / you / he / she / it / we / they had gone.	I / you / he / she / it / we / they hadn't gone.	Had I / you / he / she / it / we / they gone?
Past perfect simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I didn't been to London.	I hadn't been to London.	We use the helping verb <i>had</i> (negative = <i>hadn't</i>) in the past perfect.
When I saw him, I noticed that he had a haircut.	When I saw him I noticed that he had had a haircut.	The action (<i>a haircut</i>) happened before the other past action (<i>I noticed</i>). We use the past perfect for the action which happened first to make the time order clear to the listener.
He told me has been to London.	He told me he had been to London.	His original words were: "I have been to London." However, in reported speech we move the tense back – the present perfect (<i>have been</i>)

		becomes past perfect (<i>had been</i>).
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Structure of past perfect (continuous)

Structure of past perfect continuous		
positive	negative	question
I / you / he / she / it / we / they had been going.	I / you / he / she / it / we / they hadn't been going.	Had I / you / he / she / it / we / they been going?
Past perfect continuous – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I had working hard, so I felt very tired. I had been worked hard, so I felt very tired.	I had been working hard, so I felt very tired.	The form of the past perfect continuous is had + been + verb (-ing) .
I had been hearing the song many times before.	I had heard the song many times before.	Some verbs (called <u>stative verbs</u>) are not normally used in the continuous form, e.g. <i>know</i> ,

		<i>like, understand, believe, hear, etc.</i>
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Future tenses



Structure of future simple

Structure of future simple		
positive	negative	question
<i>I will (I'll) be there tomorrow.</i>	<i>I won't (will not) be there.</i>	<i>Will I be there tomorrow?</i>
you will, he will, she will, it will, we will, they will	you will not, he will not, she will not, it will not, we will not, they will not	will you?, will he?, will she?, will it?, will we?, will they?
Future simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
The phone's ringing : OK, I'm going to answer it.	Ok – I'll answer it.	If the action is decided at the moment of speaking, we mostly use <i>will</i> .

I'm sure he is going to help you.	I'm sure he will help you.	When we say what we think or expect, we use <i>will</i> .
I won't probably be there.	I probably won't be there. I'll probably be there.	The adverbs <i>definitely</i> and <i>probably</i> come before <i>won't</i> , but after <i>will</i> .
I promise I'm going to help.	I promise I'll help.	After <i>promise</i> we usually use <i>will</i> , not the 'going to' future.
I'll call you when I'll get to my office.	I'll call you when I get to my office.	When we refer to the future in adverbial clauses, we normally use the present simple (after <i>when</i> , <i>as soon as</i> and <i>until</i>).
If you will give me your address, I'll send you a postcard.	If you give me your address, I'll send you a postcard.	When we refer to the future in conditional clauses, we usually use the present simple .

I can't see you next week – I will return to Paris.	I can't see you next week – I am returning / am going to return to Paris.	For decisions made in the past and for things we have arranged, we use the present continuous or the ' going to ' future.
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Structure of future continuous

Future continuous tense

Structure of future continuous		
positive	negative	question
<i>I will (I'll) be waiting there at five o'clock.</i>	<i>I will not (won't) be waiting.</i>	<i>Will I be waiting there?</i>
I / you / he / she / it / we / they will be waiting	I / you / he / she / it / we / they will not (won't) be waiting	will I / you / he / she / it / we / they be waiting?



Structure of 'going to' future

Structure of 'going to' future		
positive	negative	question

<i>I'm (I am) going to take my holidays in August.</i>	<i>I'm (I am) not going to take a holiday this year.</i>	<i>Are you going to take a holiday?</i>
<i>He's (he is) going to watch TV this evening.</i>	<i>He isn't (is not) going to watch TV this evening.</i>	<i>Is he going to watch TV this evening?</i>

'Going to' for the future – common mistakes

Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
You know that I'll buy a new car, don't you?	You know that I'm going to buy a new car, don't you?	We use going to for a future action that has been decided before the time of speaking.
Look! You'll drop your books.	Look! You're going to drop your books.	We use going to if we see (and are sure) that the action will happen.



Present tenses used for the future

Present tenses used for the future	
We use the present simple when we talk about timetables and programmes.	<i>The train leaves at 12.00.</i> <i>What time does the film begin?</i>
We use the present continuous when we talk	<i>I'm going to the cinema this evening.</i> <i>I'm not working tomorrow.</i>

about things we have already arranged to do.



Structure of future perfect (simple)

Structure of future perfect (simple)		
positive	negative	question
<i>The film will have started by the time we get there.</i>	<i>The film will not (won't) have started by the time we get there.</i>	<i>Will the film have started by the time we get there?</i>
Future perfect simple – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
The film will already have started by the time we get home.	The film will already have started by the time we get home.	The form of the future perfect is will + have + past participle .
Will have you finished it by the time I come back?	Will you have finished it by the time I come back?	The structure for questions is will + subject + have + past participle .



Structure of future perfect (continuous)

Structure of future perfect continuous		
positive	negative	question

<i>Next year I'll (I will) have been working in the company for 10 years.</i>	<i>I won't (will not) have been working in the company for 10 years.</i>	<i>Will you have been working in the company for 10 years?</i>
Future perfect continuous – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
I will have working in the company for five years next month.	I will have been working in the company for five years next month.	The form of the future perfect continuous is will + have + been + present participle .
I will haven't been working in the company for five years next month.	I will not (won't) have been working in the company for five years next month.	The form of the negative is will not + have + been + present participle .
Will have you been working in the company for five years next month?	Will you have been working in the company for five years next month?	The form of the question is will + subject + have + been + present participle .
I'll have been working in three different positions at the company by the end of the year.	I'll have worked in three different positions at the company by the end of the year.	We use the simple form when we give the number of completed actions.



Passive tenses



Structure of passive forms

Structure of passive forms		
positive	negative	question
<i>The office is cleaned twice a week.</i>	<i>The office isn't (is not) cleaned twice a week.</i>	<i>Is the office cleaned twice a week?</i>
<i>The office is being cleaned at the moment.</i>	<i>The office isn't (is not) being cleaned at the moment.</i>	<i>Is the office being cleaned at the moment?</i>
<i>The office has already been cleaned.</i>	<i>The office hasn't (has not) been cleaned yet.</i>	<i>Has the office been cleaned?</i>
<i>The office will be cleaned next week.</i>	<i>The office won't (will not) be cleaned next week.</i>	<i>Will the office be cleaned next week?</i>
<i>The office can be cleaned.</i>	<i>The office cannot (can't) be cleaned.</i>	<i>Can the office be cleaned?</i>
<p>When we want to include the agent (<i>who</i>), we use a prepositional phrase with <i>by</i>:</p> <p><i>The play was written by Oscar Wilde.</i></p>		

Passive forms – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?
This problem will solved next week.	This problem will be solved next week.	To make a passive form we use be + past participle .
This problem will be solve next week.	This problem will be solved next week.	To make a passive form we use be + past participle .
My car is repairing at the moment.	My car is being repaired at the moment.	To make a passive form of a continuous tense we use be + being + past participle .
She has be invited.	She has been invited.	To make a passive form of the perfect tense we use have/has/had + been + past participle .



Structure of all past tense passive forms

Past passive forms – common mistakes		
Common mistakes	Correct version	Why?

This problem solved last week.	This problem was solved last week.	To make a past passive form we use was/were + past participle of the verb.
This problem was solve last week.	This problem was solved last week.	To make a past passive form we use was/were + past participle of the verb.
My car was repairing at that time.	My car was being repaired at that time.	To make a past passive form of a continuous tense we use was/were + being + past participle of the verb.
She has already be invited.	She has already been invited.	To make a passive form of the perfect tense we use have/has/had + been + past participle of the verb.